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the Kyungu had a miraculous power of creating animals and it was by making elephants, buffaloes, and guinea-fowl for Simbobwe and his men to hunt, and climbing Mbande when it was deserted, that he captured it. Directly he reached the top he struck his drum and 'when Simbobwe heard the drums beaten on the hill he fled to his own country'. This Kyungu's successors on Mbande became 'divine kings' with miraculous power much like that of the Lwembe at Lubaga. One of his brothers became chief of the Namwanga; another of the Iwa; and a third became the rival of his sister's son for the chieftainship of the Lambya. Such is the Ngonde account. The Kukwe say that the Kyungus of Ngonde come from the same line as the chiefs of Kabale, while the men of Lwembe insist that he was descended from a daughter of their line (*vide supra*, p. 2). What connexion existed between the lineages of Lwembe and Ngomale is uncertain, but the assumption is that they, together with the chiefs of the Pangwa and Kisi, sprang from a common stock in BuKinga.

The commonest story of origin is that all the peoples of the area, save the Sangu, emerged from a 'dark house' (*nyumba nditu*) near the present Njombe, and came to Ilongo (KwiLongo) in the forest, in what is now Bena country. Nsamba, a Nyakyusa priest of the chief's lineage, with a reputation as a historian, spoke of a 'few men' coming from 'a rocky shore to the north-west' (Lake Tanganyika?) and travelling to the east shore of Nyasa, where they increased in numbers, and then spread northwards through BuKinga; Mwenifumbo, a noble of Ngonde, spoke of Ngulube the 'pale' having come to BuKinga 'from the north'.[1] But the Kinga priests knew nothing of the 'rocky shore' or northern origin; and if we take the direction in which the corpse faces when buried (the most certain criterion of the direction of origin) then the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people came from BuKinga, some travelling to the north of Rungwe volcano and some to the south, and the Kinga themselves came from the east.

Other evidence also indicates that the chiefs came from the east or north-east rather than the north-west. The cattle they brought were the short-horned Zebu type, like those of the Masai and other peoples of central and eastern Tanganyika and Kenya. They are quite different from the long-horned cattle of the Hima

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1930). According to the Ngonde version, Ngulube was the *first* ancestor, but Nsamba began the genealogy four generations earlier (*vide* chart, facing p. 3).

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and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1]

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their bellies:

> The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa.

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 105 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911.

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are remembered, and the names of the two senior wives of a chief are often recited in genealogies because the heirs take their names from their mothers, but she-who-taught-cooking is the only heroine in her own right.

It is worth noting also that the rituals of kinship are linked neither with the heroic tradition nor with primeval incest. We could trace no myths regarding their beginning, save that concerning the origin of avoidance between father and daughter-in-law. The myth of the origin of death is a variation on the theme, so familiar in Bantu-speaking Africa, of the two messengers (a sheep and a dog in this version) sent to men by 'Kyala', one promising life, the other death. It provides no charter for the ritual.

And what of the relation between myth and history? The conquest of cultivators by cattle-keepers is the common theme of traditions in the lacustrine area, and it is quite possible that small groups of invaders, who brought with them iron tools and weapons and cattle, established themselves as chiefs over small unorganized groups of hunters and cultivators in an isolated valley three or four centuries ago.[1] The Nyakyusa valley and the plain of Ngonde have no iron ore, and the inhabitants were dependent, until the coming of the Europeans, on iron (*ikyela*) smelted in the hills to the east for weapons and tools.[2] The original inhabitants are said to have used wooden hoes exclusively—such hoes were still in common use in 1938[3]—so the myth of a Lwembe sending to BuKinga for iron hoes has a firm foundation in historical fact. But that the original inhabitants of the valley did not know the use of fire 300 or 400 years ago (when Lwembe arrived) is incredible. Here the record of one of the greatest events in history is fitted into the shallow time-scale of an isolated people. To them it is not *when* fire arrived that is really important, but *who* brought it; chiefs are chiefs to the Nyakyusa (as to other peoples in Africa) by virtue of this great benefit they brought to men.

[1] Namwanga tradition (recorded in the Mbeya District Book) tells of the introduction of iron fifteen generations ago. The Sangu tradition says that a tall, pale man from 'Somaliland' first brought iron spear-heads to BuSangu and his son established a hegemony by virtue of his superior weapons.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 7. The iron deposits on the Livingstone mountains have recently been investigated by the Colonial Development Corporation. A 'titaniferous iron mountain' in the south of Njombe District was found to be 'smeltable'. *Tanganyika: Annual Reports of the Provincial Commissioners*, 1951, p. 51.

[3] Wilson, *op. cit.*, plate VII.

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There is no single supreme power; it lies in the several heroes, in medicines, in witches, and with the shades. Kyala is a hero, a forefather, to whom sacrifices are made, and he is comparable to Lwembe and Kyungu, though he left no direct descendants. The evidence suggests that the names Kyala, Lwembe or Mbasi, Kyungu, and Ngulube were used in the same way in different areas, Kyala being the hero of the north-east shore of the Lake, Kyungu of the north-west, Lwembe of the central Nyakyusa valley, and Ngulube of the scarp edge of the Livingstones. Sometimes informants used Lwembe and Kyala alternatively saying they meant the same thing, although, as we have noted, Lwembe (or Mbasi) was specially associated with cattle, whereas Kyala, who was killed and rose again, only controlled crops, and may perhaps be taken as personifying vegetation. The distinction is in no sense clear-cut, but there is a hint of a cultivating people having been defeated by cattle-keepers with iron weapons, since Kyala was finally killed with a 'razor' (*ubwembe*), and The Razor himself —Lwembe—could not be killed though men tried.

In their creative aspect the heroes and shades are closely identified: 'Kyala creates desire'; 'the shade rouses up in the belly when a woman conceives'; 'Kyala and the shades stand together'. Kasitile said:

> Lwembe . . . makes a child. I lie with a woman; Lwembe is there, he works. Sometimes, if he is angry he works badly and a leg is missing, or the woman has a miscarriage. Sometimes he works well. Lwembe goes about looking upon the mothers; he is in my bellows (i.e. in my wife). It is he who came from BuKinga . . . and wished first to build at Nsamba's (i.e. where Nsamba go now lives). He failed there and went to Kasambala's and failed there and he seized Lubaga. All is his. A child is his and a cow, and the iron which the Kinga make is his, and food is his. . . . He is in a bull and a man. Where do you get the 'blood' (to beget a child)? Are you alone? . . . No, the Kukwe do not know Lwembe, but the people of the plain do, they are one with us.
>
> QUESTION: And Kyala?
>
> KASITILE: He is there, Kyala and Lwembe are together among us and the people of the plain. It is Lwembe who creates twins. You do not. Who has made your body? Who has created you? Who has given you strength and breath so that you are born, and live, and grow up, and marry? It is Lwembe and Kyala together.[1]

[1] cf. J. Buxe, 'Die Zwillingsgeburt bei den Nyakyusa', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 73. Jahrgang, pp. 194ff.; 'Aus dem Leben von Asyukile Malango', *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen*, Band xxxv (1950), p. 210.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of this account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organisation, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and petty, independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained *before* modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. *East African Royal Commission 1953-5, Report:* H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.